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R. R. Hughes, M.D. - The Beloved Physician  
A Memorial Address by his Pastor.

Given at the Funeral Service in Crescent Heights  
Baptist Church, Calgary, July 8, 1959

TEXT: "KNOW YE NOT THAT THERE IS A PRINCE AND A GREAT  
MAN FALLEN THIS DAY IN ISRAEL?" II Sam. 3:38.

These words are the tribute of King David to valiant Abner, after he had been treacherously slain. For us today they are appropriate as a tribute to Dr. Hughes if we let "Israel" stand for this community in which he lived and then for this church of which he was a member. "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?" That is what many of us felt when we learned of the passing of the doctor from our midst. Extravagant eulogy is not desirable at a funeral, but a deserved tribute is permissible and in this case can be so stated as to glorify God and inspire man. The unadorned facts of the career of Dr. Hughes reveal him as great in two ways.

I. He was Great as a Beloved Family Physician.

From 1912 to 1958, forty-six years, R. R. Hughes served this community as a family doctor. During twenty of those years he gave time to lecture to student nurses at the General Hospital. The 1949 Nurses' Class chose to make a dedication to him as having distinguished himself as "The true family doctor." It spoke of him as one who treated the patient, not just the disease, always willing to aid his patients in personal problems and conflicts.

Just yesterday I was shown a letter of sympathy to the family that confirms this citation. The writer said; "To me he has been so much more than a doctor.. Through very deep waters his prayers brought me, and for all he gave God the glory." That is typical of what others could say. R. R. Hughes was to many both a physician to the body and a physician to the soul. Well did that nurses' citation say, "His name is written deeply on the 'fleshy tablets' of many hearts." So we think of Dr.

Hughes as a shining example of the true family doctor. In this quiet but very practical realm, he did an immense amount of good for which many remember him with much gratitude. The nurses were right. He was great as a family physician. The other element of greatness about him was:

II. He was Great as a Devoted Servant of Christ and His Church. I have quoted nurses in their estimate of him in his profession. Now let me quote what an early pastor of this church wrote me about R. R. Hughes. First let me say that Dr. and Mrs. Hughes united with this church in 1911 or 1912. The pastor here then was Rev. H. L. Kempton. He served from 1911 to 1921 with much blessing on his work. In a letter of reminiscence to me eighteen months ago, Dr. Kempton said of his years in this church: "Dr. Hughes was like an assistant pastor." Note that. In his profession, a true family doctor: in his church, like an assistant pastor. That is a notable and deserved tribute confirmed in my own experience here as pastor.

For many years Dr. Hughes taught a Young Women's Bible Class here that flourished greatly and was a blessing to many young women. Then, in 1936, he became Sunday School superintendent and his energetic and inspiring leadership brought the school to its peak attendance and to notable effectiveness. Later he taught a mixed adult Bible Class till failing strength cut that ministry short a few years back. His forty active years amongst us included many years of service on the Board of Deacons, work as counsellor of the Young People's Society and a ministry of lay preaching. He always prepared his Bible Class lessons and sermons with great care and so got to know his Bible well. He used his wide experience with people as a source of apt illustrations and all this made him a better preacher than some ordained ministers. Nor did he limit himself in Christian work to using his public gifts. He was also a diligent, wise and successful personal worker, both in leading people to Christ and in the ministries of counsel and of comfort. All this justifies the words of Dr. Kempton, "He was like an assistant pastor." This church owes to Dr. Hughes, under God, a great debt, for he served the Lord in this congregation for forty years with zeal, wisdom, devotion and effect-

iveness. He was a great gift of God to us, and to God we give our heartfelt thanks for His servant. But what was the secret of this fine career of service? It is this:

III. He was a Man Who Walked with God. Here again let me quote something said of the doctor a few years ago by his grand-daughter, then a little girl. She had just heard for the first time the Old Testament story of Enoch, the man who walked with God. Trying to grasp the idea, she looked around for something comparable within the scope of her own observation; and, to a member of the family, she said: "Grandpa walks with God, doesn't he?" She was right. That walk with God began in his boyhood when he received Christ as his Saviour and was baptized in token of having committed himself to Christ. But not until he was launched upon his professional career, in the early years of his membership in this church, did he enter into that close walk with God that was to mark him thereafter. ✓

It was a time of revival and heart-searching in this church during the earlier years of Mr. Kempton's pastorate when, one day, Dr. Hughes walked down the aisle of our old church to confess himself a backslider, to renounce things he saw were unworthy of a Christian and to give Jesus Christ the full control of his life. From that time on his was a life of steadfast Christian consistency, zeal and devotion.

If you could take my notes and show them to him and ask, "Is this true, Doctor?" I imagine him saying, after looking them over; "well, there wasn't any need for them to make such a fuss over me." But if you pressed him, he would have to admit that he had for years sought to make life a walk with God. If you asked him how he was able to keep up with the demands of a busy practice and yet seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, he could have adapted words of the Apostle Paul and said: "The life I lived in the flesh, I lived by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." And that is the exact truth of the matter.

It was Jesus Christ who made of R. R. Hughes a man great with the greatness of goodness. He was what he was through intimate fellowship with and constant reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ whom he deeply loved and devotedly served. To this man prayer was as necessary as breathing, and meditation in the Scriptures each day as needful and as regularly practised as eating his meals. That is why his little grand-daughter saw him ✓ as a man who walked with God.

So today we thank God for this Christian gentleman: for his splendid service in his profession and for his presence amongst us so long as an ambassador of Christ. Our assurance concerning him today is expressed in these lines which Mrs. Hughes showed me yesterday:

He is at rest,  
With Christ supremely blest;  
His faith is sight,  
His hope supreme delight,  
His untold bliss---  
What thought can measure this?  
The slender veil of time is rent in twain;  
For him to live was Christ,  
To die, indeed, is gain.

And, friends, remember that God is no respecter of persons. He is as ready to enrich our lives with His presence and saving power, His guidance into Christian usefulness, as He has shown Himself to be in the life of our beloved friend and brother. If, like him, we will turn our back upon the unworthy things that mar our lives and turn our face to Jesus Christ, giving ourselves wholeheartedly to Him; then God, through His infinite mercy in Christ, will forgive and cleanse us, renew and redirect our lives and bring us into the realization of His best for our life and service. May it be so for each one of us, to the glory of Christ. Amen.